

Notes From the NWRS Meeting

By John P. Wade, MD

The 2016 Northwest Rheumatism Society Meeting (NWRS) was held in Vancouver on May 5-7, 2016. This international meeting is held annually, rotating between Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and Vancouver, British Columbia. The local organizing committees put on a two- to three-day educational meeting that has been successfully running for many decades to foster learning and provide an opportunity for collaboration between rheumatologists in the Pacific Northwest. The U.S. states include Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. Western Canadian provinces are also represented and consist of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. In recent years, the meeting has grown to be recognized as a premier educational event.

The 2016 meeting started with a state-of-the-art lecture on spondyloarthropathies given by Dr. Walter Maksymowych from the University of Alberta. There was emphasis on the current clinical appreciation of the spectrum of the disease, recent classification and treatment options. The following morning started with an update on the role of stem cell transplants for rheumatic diseases given by Dr. Sharon Le Clerq and Dr. Jan Storek from the University of Calgary. Our patients who have a poor prognosis might be considered for transplantation if no other therapies are available. A review of imaging for rheumatologists, by Dr. John O'Neill from McMaster University, emphasized the important role of imaging, highlighted the radiation risks and discussed newer imaging modalities.

Dr. Mollie Carruthers, who has recently joined our group from Harvard University, brought us up to date on the spectrum of IgG4-related disease. This was followed by two provocative talks, by Dr. Desiree van der Heijde and Dr. Robert Landewe of Europe, covering where we are with imaging for remission in rheumatoid arthritis (RA), and recent trials that suggest that ultrasound may not be as good as promised for assessment of our patients as an aid in clinical decision-making.

An outstanding lecture on newer approaches to serological diagnosis of auto-inflammatory and systemic rheumatic diseases, by Dr. Marv Fritzler, highlighted the importance of using the laboratory to better characterize some of our diseases.

This was followed by a Thieves Market where rheumatology fellows from the University of British Columbia stumped senior clinicians with rare rheumatologic cases.

Dr. Monika Ostensen from Sweden gave a state-of-the-art lecture on management of patients with rheumatic diseases in pregnancy. Following this was an eloquent discussion on structural damage in RA and psoriatic arthritis (PsA) by Dr. Georg Schett from Germany, who laid the foundation for a subsequent clinical discussion of management of these important diseases in rheumatology.

The keynote address, *Autoimmune Inflammatory Disease: Moving Towards Prevention* was given by Dr. Paul Emery from Leeds University. His lecture highlighted that while we are currently successful with established disease, we now have to set the bar higher to identify disease before damage has occurred and utilize earlier strategies in management.

The meeting ended with an excellent "year in review," by Dr. John Watterson, on the landmark papers in rheumatology in the prior 12 months.

*John P. Wade, MD
Medical Director
Pacific Arthritis Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia
University of British Columbia*



Dr. John Esdaile at the NWRS meeting.